

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
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Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
7 May 2020

Dear Mr Harding

DM/20/00952/TPO Mount Oswald Golf Club South Road Durham DH1 3TQ

Felling of trees T458, T471, T472, T504, T513 and T528. Reduction of trees T505, T506, T515 T517 to form 3m high wildlife monoliths. Pruning of trees T485, T486, T487, T488, T489, T491, T495, T497, T501, T510, T526 and T548.

The need for the work is clear and is seen as acceptable.

The Trust's concern, however, is with the tree belt that these trees are part of and its landscape treatment and maintenance. This belt is not effective in offering screening of the new housing development (Phase 4 of the Mt. Oswald overall development) or in offering perceptual protection against the busy A167 Darlington Road for the residents of the new development and users of what is to be publicly accessible open space. The loss of these trees will further weaken the tree belt.

The Mt. Oswald development is very large and has been subject to a large number of strategic submissions and more detailed development applications and revisions. While the overall masterplan covers this area it hasn't been possible for the Trust to find any detailed proposals for this Phase 4 section of the tree belt. It appears that planning applications 19/02325 and the earlier 17/01831 only cover the housing area and not the tree belt.

Earlier Durham County Council 2017 landscape comment requested further detail to cover these trees: *'In past discussions on this part of the masterplan we have raised the need to augment the existing tree belts along the western edge of the site with a more visually dense under-storey and supplementary planting. We understand that this element of the structural landscaping would be developed by HJB: the boundary of this application is drawn to exclude that area along with the canopies and RPA of tree belts along the A167.'*

The urgent need for these TPO works is concerning given how long the masterplan has been in place and how far the development has progressed. Tree inspections should have been in place earlier and implemented to ensure safety together with protective measures for the tree belt during construction. This should also have been accompanied by any necessary planting or treatments to ensure early establishment of any strengthening for the belt. There is no prior work evident in association with this TPO application. What is termed woodland management within the documentation, whilst illustrating good practice, is not specific and does not indicate in the required depth what the landscape treatment and maintenance is to be. It is not sufficient to meet any landscape requirements.

The Trust therefore questions the context for this application and what measures are in place to protect and strengthen the tree belt.

It requests that any necessary work to ensure full replacement of the felled trees is required by condition attached to any ensuing TPO approval.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe, Chair of the City of Durham Trust